BOSS IN THE CLOVER

Bull Fights at Home In Bucolic Neighborhoods

WAR IN PASTURES AND WOODS

Texas, the Lone Star State, is the France of America—Jefferson's Bull Under Glass.

The green valleys of the springtime come back to us as enchanted in our autumnal years, when the frosts stop the songs of the prophetic katydids, the roasting ears harden, the apples mellow and the fish swim with the currents of the rivers.

It was many and many a year ago in a kingdom of the west—before Edgar Allan Poe had written Annabel Lee—that the boys of a smiling land, half woods and half corn, heard there was war with Mexico, and Texas was to be ours. Some persons thought it wrong to go to war for Texas, but Andrew Jackson was in favor of the annexation of the Lone Star republic, and that answered all objections.

We can hardly understand now, so far away then was the gulf of Mexico, what a mystery was the Mississippi river, what tales came from the remote south of the monstrous stream, what an attraction it was to go on steamboats and ships bound for the halls of the Montezuma, how certain it was that the Mexicans were to be whipped, what a romance the history of the conquests of Hernando Cortez was and how familiar Gautemosin on his bed of roses seemed.

Our politicians builded wiser than they knew when they gained imperial Texas—the France of America on the American Mediterranean—and golden California. It was bad politics, perhaps, but good statesmanship, and the somber Jackson was wiser and greater than the brilliant Clay.

There was a chill on the air when letters came that told some of the boys were dead of camp fever on the Rio Grande, and others had been killed in battle with copper bullets. Some of the cripples came home from Monterey, and there was a poem written by Capt. Cutter who brought back the pistols of young Harry Clay, speared by the Mexican lancers, and gave them to his father at Lexington, and the poem began:

> "On Buena Vista's bloody field,
> A soldier dying lay,
> His thoughts upon his happy home,
> Two thousand miles away."

The returning braves were stored with stories of the Spaniards, and the strange mingling of races in the lands of the sun, and the bull fights that

JOE JEFFERSON'S BULL UNDER GLASS.

were as exciting as the battles that made us masters of the City of Mexico. But there was bull fighting without going abroad: the boys and the bulls of our own country were, as they are, forever at war.

This warfare goes on, and the journals are often supplied with news of the engagements that so diversify agricultural experiences. Next to snake and bear stories the bull fights have an honored place in our literature. Bears are departing with the buffalo, and a fresh narrative of an old fashioned encounter would be more charming if less flavored with the suspicion of antiquity. Still the number of our fellow citizens who have stabbed gigantic black bears to death just in time is remarkable. The grizzlies die slowly.

There was a time when bear stories were more important to newspapers than telegrams. The supply of snake stories holds out because the snakes, like great men, continue to sun themselves while shrinking from the public gaze. The bull stories increase in general interest, largely owing to the irritable disposition of the Jersey breed. The Alderney cows seem to have all the good nature in the herd.

Rear the Jersey bull tenderly as you may, and when he gets big he goes bad, and he will gore his proud master with alacrity and deadly violence. It is commonplace to read that some old farmer fond of cattle has met his fate at the horns and hoofs of his favorite bull, especially if he has been indulging his fancy for Jerseys. The information that the direct ducal descendant of Columbus was a breeder of bulls was an introduction that gave him the benefit of widespread sympathy, and it was sad indeed to hear that he had lost his fortune attempting to make bull fighting as popular an amusement in Paris as in Madrid. Why did he not try it in America?

Joe Jefferson has, as a farmer, had experiences with bulls and in an after-dinner speech gave a modest relation of an adventure that may be taken as typical. Joe's farm was in New Jersey, where there was a great deal of gravel rather too near the surface, and gravel so situated that it drained both ways, into the ground and upward by capillary attraction. Joe had a great mishap, and he said: "It was when my Alderney bull got into the greenhouse. There was nothing to stop him but the cactus. He tossed the flower pots right and left. Talk about the flowers that bloom in the spring, why I never saw such a wreck, and I am fully convinced that there is nothing that will stop a thoroughly well bred bull but a full bred South American cactus. I went down to look at the ruins and the devastation that this animal had made, and I found him quietly eating black Hamburg grapes. I don't know anything finer than black Hamburg grapes for Alderney bulls. A friend of mine who was chaffing me for my farming proclivities said: 'I see you've got in some confusion here. It looks to me from seeing that gentleman there—that stranger in the greenhouse—that you're trying to raise early bulls under glass.'"

It is tolerably clear that this great mishap on the sandy soil of New Jersey drove Jefferson to Buzzard's Bay, caused his amiable acquaintance with President Cleveland, and changed the current of history. Many things would have been very different if the Alderney bull had not been attracted by black Hamburg grapes rather than to Mr. Jefferson himself. One of the conceits of the average farmer is that he is personally supreme over the beasts of the field and the stable. He will caution others about his bull, but as for himself he takes a club, or at utmost a pitchfork, and with such a weapon risks his life and sometimes loses it on

DAVID AND GOLIATH.

his own land, which, to the agricultural mind, is an additional exasperation. Once in awhile there is a splendid combat between a bull and a ram. One instance shows the uncertainty of the fortunes of war.

A heavy ram with silky fleece and fine curling horns met an evil-minded bull in a clover field, and the attention of the two animals being called to each other, it became necessary to ascertain on the spot which was boss. The bull was a shade contemptuous, and yet did not like the independent way the ram looked at him and jumped stiff legged, instead of recognizing superior force and getting out of the way. The bull snorted, shook his head, placed his fore-feet widely apart, and put down his head so that his nose was in the clover blossoms. This seemed to the ram an invitation, and with a sudden rush and spring he butted the bull square between the eyes and knocked him down. It was almost another case of David and Goliath, and those were the pet names of the animals as long as they lived. Goliath got upon his feet with extreme astonishment and stumbled away. Sheep were to him dreaded objects on the face of the landscape. He never hunted rams any more. David was boss and he knew it.

The literature of American bull fighting would be more voluminous if the choicest combats were not as a rule out of the regular range of reporters. Only when a Texas steer breaks forth in Manhattan, tackles the police, the butchers and the newsboys, is justice done the entertainment.

The street tournaments are irregular. On the farm there is life close to nature. The fiercest struggles between men and the alleged inferior animals are in the fields. The patient horse takes his beatings from his exacting master with little resentment, only once in awhile kicking him or running away with him, or with members of the family, scattering the harness and wheels. The solemn ram with curling horns occasionally (as we have given an illustrative incident) rebels and plunges headlong against the common enemy. The boar is killed before he grows tusks to carve the legs of the farmer or his horse. The dog is the ally of the agriculturist, and is petted until he is suspected of illness, when he is massacred for a mad dog. Only the bull with daggers fitted to his head, hoofs like iron and a voice of thunder, really asserts himself habitually against the tyrant man, and goes roaring when he has on his mind visions of vengeance and destruction.

There were many villages long ago (and a few now) situated in rich agricultural districts where poor people kept cows that were expected to pick up a living in the fence corners of the green lanes, and by excursions into the fields where they did not belong. There was generally a bull or two with the airs of superior creatures, and educated to take advantages. They were not enterprising as they ought to have been in fighting each other. "Town cattle" is the country name for the marauding herds, and the land owners regard them as a private menace and public wrong. For miles around one of the pretty towns whose cattle infest

THE TAIL CAME OFF.

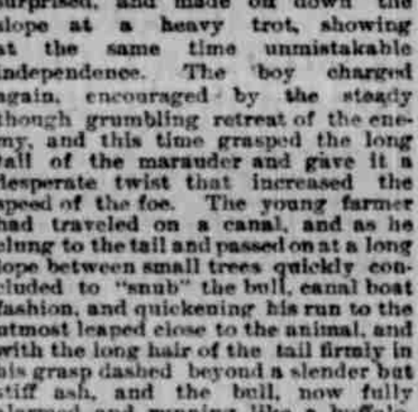
the roads more than they do a thousand hills, the farmers' sons are watchful and wrathy, and when the town cattle are seen bent on errands of mischief, they are pelted with showers of stones, and dogs are turned upon them, and if there is stubborn resistance, pitchforks are used, until, when the invaders disappear in a cloud of dust, there is a feeling that a battle has been won.

Once it would have been a sad story for a fellow citizen elected to a western state legislature if he had introduced a bill to compel bulls and cows and all domestic animals to be kept within the owners' inclosures. Why, the ministers, the wagonmaker, the grocery-keeper, the blacksmith, the shoemaker, the school-teacher, the huckster, and all the widows keep cows! They have to have milk, do they not? What kind of a country would it be to deny the widow and the fatherless the comfort of a cow? There were, however, troubles that approached tragedies growing out of keeping cattle forced to pick up a dishonest living. They were expected when the grass grew dusty in the roads, and the cornstalks were tall and green, and the developing ears milky, just before "the frost was on the pumpkin and the fodder in the shock," to break through the fences and help themselves.

Once upon a time in a cozy valley in the Western Kingdom, in the midst of which there was a cluster of nice houses, and all the roads were grassy and much woodland unfenced offered free food, there were cows that yielded milk that was repeatedly skimmed, and there was a tawny bull with ugly eye and glistening horns and a very long tail, and he did not seem to care much what he did so he could paw the earth and roar like a lion, overthrow a fence when he liked, stand unabashed in the presence of dogs and hold up his head before farmers' sons in a hateful way, expressive not merely of aggressive independence, but of supercilious scorn.

There was a stout boy whose duty it was to be a sentinel, keeping guard over his father's field to see that the town cattle did not damage the corn on the hillside that was exposed to invasion from a dense wood. The tawny bull with the ugly eye and long tail had an increasing notion of hooking a rail or two from the fence and helping himself, making way for others. The boy was kept so busy by the aggressive brute that squirrel hunting and fishing were forbidden joys, and he became desperate. In spite of his vigilance mischief was done, and he was scolded until impressed that the time was at hand when the use of firearms would be justified. The bull despised finger stones, and grew so saucy that when detected in stealing young corn he declined to run. The boy did not get scared at the bull; he got mad. He did not mean to be bullied by any beast, and prepared a spear of wood, the point hardened in the fire, Indian fashion, and also equipped himself with a sling and smooth pebbles from the brook, after the illustrious example of David. He was now on a war footing for both long and short range. His ambition was to go forth armed with a horse pistol, but there had been fines levied for shooting cattle. Still there was no law against a boy providing himself with homemade weapons for self protection when his duty forced him into the society of savage animals.

He found his enemy one afternoon on the top of a hill that sloped through a scrap of woodland adjacent to the devastated corn and opened fire with the sling. The bull was not struck—for the sling is not a weapon exact in discharge—but only disturbed by the whizzing of the stones. Presently the boy resolved to settle the question of precedence then and there, for life was becoming a burden not worth carrying on the bull's terms, and taking the advantage of the down hill he made a



"WHERE DID YOU GET THAT?"

rush with the Indian spear. When the bull felt his sides scratched he was surprised, and made off down the slope at a heavy trot, showing at the same time unmistakable independence. The boy charged again, encouraged by the steady though grumbling retreat of the enemy, and this time grasped the long tail of the marauder and gave it a desperate twist that increased the speed of the foe. The young farmer had traveled on a canal, and as he clung to the tail and passed on at a long lope between small trees quickly concluded to "snub" the bull, canal boat fashion, and quickening his run to the utmost leaped close to the animal, and with the long hair of the tail firmly in his grasp dashed beyond a slender but stiff ash, and the bull, now fully alarmed and running like a buffalo, was caught by his appendix, which twined about the ash and clung to the rough bark, and with a sharp report like the breaking of a rope the tail snapped and the bull with the bleeding stump curled like an inverted comma, bellowed with pain and did not pause in his headlong flight until he reached the village, a mile away, where his dilapidated condition was the wonder of all beholders. The conqueror, bearing the trophy of his power and canal boat science, hastened home and encountered his father, who asked with peremptory incredulity: "Where did you get that?" "Got it," said the hero, "why I got tired of that brindle bull, and caught him and pulled his tail off; that's all!" The old farmer said: "Come, come, tell the truth," and when the tail, still warm, was placed in his hands, amazement was on his countenance. The exact statement that followed did not dissipate the surprise, in which "the hired man" by that time participated, but the details were soon understood to be extraordinarily funny, and the incident was presently decorated until it became incredible, and so was spoiled, and has been distorted in its growth for half a century. The subsequent proceedings on the farm interested the brindle bull no more. He was humiliated. His pride seemed to depart from him and he sought other pastures. It is a proverb in the country that a stump tailed bull has a bad show for the pursuit of happiness, and will allow himself to be put upon. It is different with a hog: the more you cut his tail off the greater his confidence in himself, but hog fighting, though interesting, does not rank in history with the battles between boys and bulls.

MURAT HALSTEAD.

SECURED JUSTICE.

How a French Soldier Secured the Appointment He Deserved.

It is usually possible to secure recognition for real merit, but to accomplish this some ingenuity is required at times. A French writer tells a story of a French soldier (Chevert) who was as modest as he was brave, but who felt that he had waited for promotion long enough.

He had every claim to the command of a company in his regiment, but his colonel asked that the appointment be given to one of his protegees. Chevert went to Versailles and obtained an audience with the minister of war. This official said that he knew nothing about him.

"Very well," said Chevert, "simply write to my colonel and ask him to recommend some brave and skillful soldier for an important and difficult task."

The minister sent the message, and the name given in the colonel's reply was Chevert. He received his promotion at once.

Chevert found an appreciative friend in Marshal Saxe. The marshal heard some titled officers speaking of his friend Chevert.

"The fellow rose from the ranks," said one, contemptuously.

Saxe turned to the speaker and said, severely: "Sir, I always esteemed Chevert; now that I learn from you that he rose from the ranks, I find that I owe him respect and admiration."—Youth's Companion.

She Went After Another.

A woman recently complained to the police that a fortune teller had swindled her out of a fifteen-dollar gold ring.

"How did it happen?" asked the sergeant at the station.

"I went to consult a clairvoyant about a—well, about a little affair in which I am interested, and she said: 'I must have some of your gold before I can work the charm.' Well, the only gold I had about me was that ring, and, of course, I let her have it. She agreed to return it after a few days, as soon as she had worked out what I wanted to know; but when I went there to-day I found she had moved and none of the neighbors knew where she had gone."

"Well, why don't you consult another clairvoyant and get track of her?" asked the sergeant, sympathetically.

"That's so! I never thought of that," said the woman, brightening up and bidding the officer good day. "You police officers beat all for thinking of things. Indeed you do!"—Tid-Bits.